

MOHAVE COUNTY BOARD of SUPERVISORS



BUSTER D. JOHNSON
SUPERVISOR DISTRICT 3

**Committee on Natural Resources Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests, and Public
Lands Legislative Hearing**

1324 Longworth House Office Building

June 5, 2019

10:00 a.m.

**Legislative Hearing on *H.R. 1373 and H.R. 2181*
Questions from Rep. Gosar for Supervisor Buster Johnson**

1. I want to respond to something Mr. Lowenthal said at the hearing there being little to no uranium in the withdrawal area in H.r. 1373. If there weren't significant mining deposits in the area, Rep. Grijalva wouldn't have introduced a form of this bill every year since 2008.
2. There was a lot of lies and misinformation thrown around at the hearing alleging harm from uranium mining to the Grand Canyon. The Grand Canyon National Park is already protected by the Grand Canyon Protection Act, Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, numerous other state and federal regulations, the 1.02 million acre Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monument, two other national monuments, two national recreation areas and seven wilderness areas. The proposed withdrawal is miles away from the actual Grand Canyon itself. Any uranium operation will also have to comply with all state and federal environmental laws and go through the normal NEPA process correct?

Answer: Yes, you are correct.

3. No one in this room wants to harm the Grand Canyon or the Colorado River. And lifting the arbitrary, political ban unilaterally implemented by the Obama Administration won't contaminate the Colorado River or cause harm to the Grand Canyon. And actual science supports these facts. The Arizona Geological Survey [published](#) a report finding that uranium mining would not contaminate the Colorado River, the Grand Canyon or surrounding watersheds. The study concluded that under an absolute "worst-case, mining-related uranium spill into the Colorado River, an increase of 0.02 ppb uranium would be trivial in comparison to the EPA drinking water Maximum Containment Level of 30 ppb uranium." Are you aware of this report and is it legitimate?

Answer: Yes, I am aware of this report and I find it to be thoroughly researched and legitimate.

4. Republican Leader Bishop asked for the Arizona Land Trusts previous comment letter on the proposed withdrawal. I would like to also submit the State Land Trusts comment letter from 2011 (see other attachment). The comment letter describes losses to the state

land trust in the range of \$1.5 million to \$18.5 million for each individual mine in a breccia pipe. Are you concerned about the loss of those state revenues and the harm this will cause to education in Arizona?

Answer: Yes, I am concerned about the loss of the state revenues and the damages this will have on our educational system that relies on this money not only for today's expenditure but for the future of our educational system.

5. Industry studies have shown direct adverse impacts from the current Obama withdrawal to rural portions of six counties in Arizona (Mohave, Coconino) and Utah (Kane, Garfield, San Juan and Washington) of between 2,000-4,000 lost jobs and \$29 billion in overall economic activity in the region at peak production. Are you concerned about these job losses and can you elaborate on what a permanent withdrawal would do to employment in Mohave County?

Answer: Since the withdrawal, Mohave County and the surrounding areas affected have seen a number of miners leave the area to seek employment elsewhere. A permanent ban will only make things worse. We have already seen the trickle-down effect of what happens when this occurs. Other supporting businesses in the area have had to scale back their businesses and some have outright closed down. You see some head of households able to find employment in neighboring states which leaves some families broken as the children and wife will stay behind to try and maintain the home front. This leads to problems in the schools as well as children seem to act up without a father figure around. As families move out of some of these once prominent areas, the enrollment rate in the schools are falling which in turn brings less revenue to the educational districts. What we are seeing is once thriving, stable communities are becoming deserted places with vacant houses and businesses. If a permanent ban is put into place, it will only get worse and some of the towns and cities near the Arizona Strip could become ghost towns in under ten years. When this occurs the chances of bringing back a viable community is often times nonexistence.